



THE CITY OF
CANTON
WILLIAM J. HEALY II, MAYOR

NEWS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Date: March 18, 2015

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Great things are happening in Canton and greater things are coming!

CANTON, Ohio – Mayor Healy delivered his eighth State of the City address Wednesday evening. The speech focused on the continual pursuit of excellence throughout every department as well as the entire community of Canton. “When I was first elected, the initial goal was to stop the decline. Shortly thereafter, the great recession hit and unemployment was 15% while safety forces dropped to the lowest level in 50 years,” stated Mayor Healy. Since that time period, Mayor Healy has been in the continual pursuit of excellence, and today great things are happening in Canton.

The speech highlighted the importance of having a talented, hardworking leadership team, staff, and city council. The city’s overall financial position is continuing to improve. The income revenue collected was the highest in history for the second year in a row, and overall debt has been continually reduced. The Mayor pointed out that the impact of the state cuts to local governments are equal to the impact the great recession had on our city! That is how much we have been hurt by the Governor and state legislative policies.

Mayor Healy then discussed the four pillars that make a strong city: Safety, Education, Neighborhoods, and Economic Development. Referring to safety, Mayor Healy stated that our police and fire departments have the most professional, skilled, trained, and diverse forces in the region. Our fire department responded to over 15,000 calls in 2014, and our police department has reduced overall crime by nearly 25% since 2008 through various strategies. “As the economy recovers, every dollar available is being diverted to restore ranks in both police and fire departments as our first priority,” stated Healy.

Education was stated as the second pillar of a strong community. Graduation rates are now over 80% at McKinley and Timken High Schools, and over 90% for Plain Local Schools, collectively Canton has one of the highest graduation rates of all of the larger cities in Ohio. In addition, the City of Canton’s scholarship now has 14 participating colleges and universities that guaranty money for Canton students with the addition of Youngstown State and Texas Southern.

Healthy and attractive neighborhoods were the focus of the third pillar. Mayor Healy recognized the neighborhood associations and all of the residents who work diligently caring for their homes and taking pride in their neighborhoods. The single most important blueprint for years to come, the Comprehensive Plan, is in process and will be completed within a few months. “This plan is your plan and is being created by all of you. It will help set our priorities and vision to move Canton forward for years to come,” explained Mayor Healy.

The highlight of the 2015 State of the City was clearly economic development. The unemployment rate dropping to a 30-year low of 5.1% accurately confirmed the growing strength of the economy, as five years prior, unemployment was at 15%. Business growth downtown and throughout the community have been possible with partners such as the Canton Regional Chamber of Commerce, Stark County Oil and Gas Partnership, the Local Building Trades, Stark Development Board and other government officials. The highlight and grand finale of the speech was Mayor Healy proudly introducing David Baker, the Executive Director of the Pro Football Hall of Fame, describing the exciting development of the Hall of Fame Village. Mayor Healy with city council presented the Pro Football Hall of Fame their commitment and investment to this project with a check of \$5 million dollars. “What we now call the Hall of Fame Village is more than bricks and mortar. It’s a game changer for the City of Canton and will serve as the economic engine for the entire region for years to come,” Mayor Healy stated.

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